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REVIEWS

Poverty and Social Progress. By MAURICE PARMELEE. New York: Macmillan, 1916. Pp. xv+477.

In this book the author undertakes the impossible. He undertakes to present in a single moderate-sized volume a thoroughly exhaustive (in spite of the author's admission in his preface, it is that or nothing) treatment of one of the greatest social phenomena in all its aspects. The phenomenon which he chooses is poverty. His conception of his task is absolutely correct. He recognizes that poverty is so closely allied with every conceivable phase of human existence that to treat poverty inclusively necessitates examining in detail every other aspect of social life, and indicating the interrelationship which exists. This the author endeavors to do, and it should be stated at the outset that his undertaking is carried out in a scholarly, painstaking, and sensible manner. But it does not succeed because it could not succeed. A brief survey of the scope of the book will make this clear.

In the first two chapters the author discusses the nature of the social organization and of pathological social conditions in general. He then turns to the analysis of the causes and conditions of poverty. The causes are individual and social. Among the individual causes are pathological conditions of the mind and body. These abnormal conditions and diseases are classified and briefly described, and their main causes noted. Among the social causes of poverty are matters of the size and growth of population, the increase and distribution of wealth, unemployment, the sweating system, and political, domestic, and matrimonial maladjustment. Somewhat illogically, chapters on the standard of living and the extent of poverty are sandwiched in the midst of the discussion of the causes of poverty. Each of these causes in its turn receives a somewhat extended examination. The third part of the book, dealing with remedial and preventive measures, follows a similar plan. Social insurance, thrift, pensions, socialism and syndicalism, trades unionism, philanthropy, pensions, all sorts of schemes for raising wages and redistributing incomes are discussed. The closing chapter is devoted to social progress and the coming of the normal life.

Now in such a study as this two main faults are practically unavoidable. In the first place, the treatment of the various related topics cannot possibly be thorough, however much it may appear so superficially. In the second place, the essential relationships, which are, after all, the vital thing and the thing the reader is looking for, are either obscured or absolutely neglected in the enormous mass of detail. One has to stop somewhere in such a train of cause and effect, and it conduces to clearness to stop much nearer the central theme than our author does. For example, it is obviously desirable to call attention to the important part played by bodily disease in the causation of poverty. But it adds nothing to the understanding of poverty to go on to an elaborate classification of disease and analysis of its causes. The space so employed might better be occupied by visualizing in a more vital way the actual rôle of disease in the lives of the poor classes. So it is necessary to recognize that many of the causes of poverty are biological, and are to be eliminated only by eugenic measures. But it is not necessary to go into an elaborate discussion of the eugenics movement. There are plenty of good books on eugenics. Furthermore, it is practically impossible to avoid the omission of certain topics which the scope of the book logically calls for. Thus the author has practically nothing to say about the racial causes of poverty, nor those causes which inhere in the physical environment; neither is there any discussion of wage theories. The result of all this is that the reader closes the book with scarcely a single clear-cut idea as to the origin and causation of poverty, nor of how to go to work actually to cure or to prevent it. Finally it must be observed that this plan of writing books involves an enormous amount of repetition in the case of each new topic. Thus if the author's proposed book on crime and vice (p. 452) follows the plan of the book on poverty, fully half of the present volume might be incorporated practically verbatim in the new book. For almost everything that is a cause of, or a cure for, poverty, is also a cause of, or a cure for, crime and vice.

It is easy to criticize a book of this sort, not only as regards its general outlines, but as regards its details. Only a few faults of the latter sort need be noted here. In the first place, the conscious or unconscious imitation of Henry George's famous title is open to question, especially since extremely little is said about social progress in this book. The style is monotonous, and exceedingly pedantic, such expressions as "let us now turn," "we shall now discuss," etc., recurring with great frequency. There is also much repetition, some of it unavoid-

able, but some inexcusable, such as: "It goes without saying that these remarks do not imply that there should be no woman or child labor whatever" (p. 130). "Now it goes without saying that work in itself is not necessarily a bad thing for children" (p. 139). "It goes without saying that woman labor in itself is not a bad thing" (p. 140). Particularly unfortunate is our author's seeming reluctance, in a supposedly scientific treatise, to furnish clean-cut definitions of some of his major terms. Thus, although a definition of normality is tacitly promised on p. 8, none is forthcoming, nor does the author use the concept with entire consistency. Pauperism is another term similarly handled.

Following these extended and rather sweeping criticisms, it should be repeated that there is much of good in the book. The author's attitude toward his subject and toward society is progressive, rather than radical, and his discussions abound in pertinent observations and helpful suggestions, not to mention the enormous collection of facts which he presents. The book is well worth reading—one is tempted to say, more worth reading than writing.

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The Socialism of To-day. A Source-Book of the Present Position and Recent Development of the Socialist and Labor Parties in All Countries, Consisting Mainly of Original Documents. Edited by WILLIAM ENGLISH WALLING, J. G. PHELPS STOKES, JESSIE WALLACE HUGHAN, HARRY W. LAIDLER, and other members of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1916. Pp. xvi+631+633+642.

The claim for this book by the editors is that it is the first international and comprehensive source-book in any language dealing with the socialist movement.

The volume is dedicated to all persons who wish to understand the socialist movement as it is.

The purpose of the volume seems to be the convincing of the reader of the importance of the socialist movement, whether he believes in it or not, by the sheer mass of the material collected from every quarter of the civilized world.

The first part is given to the socialist parties of the world and contains twenty-five chapters. These are subdivided into five sections: "The International," "Socialism on the Continent of Europe," "The